



News Release

Office of the Louisiana State Fire Marshal
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THE SENSELESS KILLER

Fire Marshal Warns of Carbon Monoxide Dangers

Baton Rouge -- It's a killer that you can't see, smell, or taste. Initial symptoms mimic the flu, and can include: dizziness, fatigue, headache, nausea, and irregular breathing. High levels of exposure result in the death of approximately 200 people per year in the United States. This "senseless" killer is Carbon Monoxide, and it's produced by the incomplete burning of solid, liquid, and gaseous fuels. Therefore, any fuel-burning appliance or device in your home or camp is a potential source of Carbon Monoxide.

CARBON MONOXIDE FACTS:

- ? When breathed, Carbon Monoxide attaches itself to your body's hemoglobin and displaces the oxygen that the body organs need. Many people with CO poisoning mistake their symptoms for the flu or are misdiagnosed by physicians, which sometimes results in tragedy.
- ? Some people are more vulnerable to Carbon Monoxide poisoning: Infants, children, senior citizens, and those with heart or lung problems.
- ? Appliances that are kept in good condition produce little Carbon Monoxide, however improperly operating appliances can produce fatal CO concentrations in your home.
- ? Using charcoal and/or propane cookers indoors, running a car in an attached garage, or using a portable "camping-type" heater, lantern or stove that is not equipped with the new generation of Oxygen Depletion Sensor (ODS) can cause deadly Carbon Monoxide poisoning in your home or camp.
- ? Carbon Monoxide detectors are reasonably inexpensive devices, and are available for your home, boat, motor home, or towable recreational vehicle. It is recommended that a Carbon Monoxide detector be installed adjacent to every separate sleeping area.

IMPORTANT TIPS:

- ? Regularly have your fuel-burning appliances (including fireplaces/chimneys) serviced by qualified service personnel with the proper knowledge, skills, and tools. Always refer to the owner's manual when performing minor adjustment/service of fuel-burning appliances.
- ? Never burn charcoal inside a home, garage, vehicle, or tent.
- ? Never use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home garage, vehicle, or tent UNLESS it is equipped with the new-generation of Oxygen Depletion Sensor (ODS). Even if your camping heater IS equipped with an ODS, turn it OFF before going to sleep.

***** MORE MORE MORE *****

- ? Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.
- ? Never use gas appliances such as ranges, ovens, or clothes dryers for heating your home.
- ? Never operate unvented fuel-fired appliances in any room with closed doors or windows or in any room where people are sleeping.
- ? Know the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning: headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness, and confusion. Carbon Monoxide reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen, and low blood oxygen levels can result in loss of consciousness and even death. These symptoms closely mimic the flu, and are often misdiagnosed. If you experience these symptoms, it is advisable to extinguish any possible source(s) of Carbon Monoxide and move to an area with fresh air -- Remember, if you have any of these symptoms and if you feel better when you go outside our home and the symptoms reappear once you're back inside, you may have CO poisoning.
- ? Install at least one UL listed Carbon Monoxide Detector in the hall outside sleeping rooms. This type of detector is designed to sound an alarm BEFORE the carbon monoxide level in your home becomes hazardous. If a home has more than one story, a detector should be placed on each story.

"This is an extremely important safety message, particularly during the winter months," said Fire Marshal V. J. Bella. "The Fire Marshal's Office strongly encourages everyone to have their home heating systems, including their chimneys, inspected annually by a qualified technician. We are also encouraging those of you who utilize portable heaters to upgrade to the new-generation of portable heater equipped with the Oxygen Depletion Sensor." It should be noted that consumers can find these ODS-equipped portable heaters under various brands in major retail stores nationwide. The new heaters can be identified by labels on the package that read in part, "Designed for Indoor Use, "Low Oxygen Automatic Shut-Off System," and "Oxygen Depletion Sensor".

"But foremost," said Fire Marshal Bella, "we are encouraging the citizens of Louisiana to install a listed Carbon Monoxide Detector in the hallway adjacent to their sleeping rooms. I feel that these detectors are as effective in preventing CO poisoning deaths as smoke detectors are in preventing fire deaths. With a bit of PREVENTION, we can keep this Senseless Killer out of our homes."

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